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Brain of JFK Withheld From Evidence, Doctor Says

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Associated Press
WASHINGTON — The preserved brain of President Kennedy, plus microscopic slides of tissues removed from his bullet wounds, have been withheld, apparently by his family, from the assassination evidence in the National Archives, a medical expert said today.

The expert, Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, is the first critic of the Warren Commission's report on the assassination to be allowed to see the items from the autopsy on the president.

While he was in Washington last week to examine the evidence, Wecht was provided transportation by an organization called the Committee to Investigate Assassinations (CIA), of which New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison is a member.

GARRISON ALSO has attacked the conclusions of the Warren Commission and tried unsuccessfully to have New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw convicted of conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy.

(Wecht asserted that questions about Kennedy's wounds would remain unanswered as long as the brain and tissue slides "are not available for examination." A Kennedy family spokesman replied that all evidence requested by the Justice Department has been placed in the archives and that Wecht had turned to "offensive" probing because the evidence in the archives did not support his doubts about the official finding that the assassination was the deed of Lee Harvey Oswald alone.)

Interviews with government officials and Kennedy's for-

mer personal secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, disclose that the slides and probably the brain, which was removed from the body in the autopsy in 1963 and was preserved in a container of formalin, were delivered in a locked chest to a representative of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in 1965.

When the autopsy materials were placed in the National Archives by 1966 by Burke Marshall, a representative of the Kennedy family, the slides, the brain and possibly some other items were not included.

DR. MARSHALL, a law professor at Yale University, said in an interview last night that he never had possession of the chest of items and that he had no knowledge of the brain or any other objects not now in the archives.

He said that Atty. Gen. Nicholas D. B. Katzenbach had ruled that certain X rays, color transparencies and photographs taken at the autopsy were evidence relevant to the assassination, and that he, Marshall, obtained these from the Kennedy family and lodged them with the archives in 1966.

Marshall said other items apparently have not been released by the Justice Department because "they have no bearing on who killed the president." He deplored Wecht's "chasing after parts of the president's body because he hasn't found any evidence that anything else was wrong."

Wecht, coroner of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Pa., and a past president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, said the

slides should show definitely if all of Kennedy's gunshot wounds were from the rear, as was concluded by the commission of inquiry under Chief Justice of the United States Earl Warren:

ENTERING BULLETS burn and kill tissues around the wound of entry but not at the point of exit, he said. Thus, the microscopic slides could settle the question whether the bullets that passed through the president's head and body had been fired from the rear.

Examination of the brain is necessary, Wecht said, because photographs of the top of the removed brain, which were shown to him, disclose a sizable foreign object that could have been a flattened bullet fragment or a brain tumor.

In either event, he said, it is "unacceptable that the public has never been told what it was." He described the object as a parallelogram at least one-half by three-quarters of an inch in size.

The official report on the autopsy performed by three military physicians on Nov. 22, 1963, the day of the assassination in Dallas, did not mention the object. A subsequent panel of four physicians appointed by Ramsey Clark when he was attorney general—they also were not shown the actual brain—reported the presence of the object in the photographs.

WECHT, A PATHOLOGIST and a lawyer, said he felt certain the brain is still "around somewhere" and that he intends to ask Marshall to permit a panel of experts to inspect it. "Who would have taken the responsibility to destroy the brain?" he asked.

Warren Commission records show only that the brain was "removed and preserved for further study" in the autopsy, and that the usual sections were not removed for analysis, "in the interest of preserving the specimen."